

# Abolitionists and the Underground Railroad in the Essex National Heritage Area



In his 1936 book, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, Wilber H. Seibert identifies several different “lines” of the Underground Railroad through Essex County.

Those lines are indicated on this map, although they were probably not the only routes taken by fugitive slaves in the early nineteenth century.

The locations and individuals in this guide are linked to the Underground Railroad story in the Essex National Heritage Area. Some are public places or are accessible through reservations or special arrangement. Others are privately owned homes for which information may be requested by contacting local historical societies or the National Park Service.

*Before the Civil War, many liberals who supported the abolition of slavery lived in the area now called the Essex National Heritage Area. By the mid-nineteenth century, American abolitionists operated an increasingly sophisticated network of assistance to escaped slaves throughout the Northern states called the Underground Railroad (UGRR), which was neither “underground” nor a “railroad.”*

The harbors, rivers and access to the sea of the Essex National Heritage Area made it an important escape route for runaway slaves headed to Canada. Free blacks, white liberals and religious leaders were among the railroad's "conductors" who risked their own freedom, since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 made it mandatory for free states to return runaways. Free blacks who aided runaways were especially at risk, as they could be sent back into slavery. All participants risked their property and their standing in a divided community that often feared war and believed slavery was an issue best dealt with by the Southern states. No one knows for sure exactly how many or how often escapees came through Essex County. However, traces of escaped slaves passing through Salem and its environs may be found in local newspaper ads offering rewards for the return of individual runaways, in personal records and letters, in anti-slavery society reports, and in local publications.

While the most active period of the underground railroad occurred from the early 1800s to the end of the Civil War in 1865, earlier events foreshadowed its activities. There were active attempts at escape in North America during the late 1600s and 1700s by African

and Native American slaves. Although most escapees fled to the free Northern states and to Canada, some fugitives went to Spanish Florida and Mexico.

The strength of abolitionism was in its diversity. The call to end human bondage inspired freed African Americans and northern white liberals, especially Quakers, to form abolitionist societies, such as the New England Anti-Slavery Society. However, although white abolitionists were crucial to the operations of the underground railroad, not all of them participated in or sanctioned its activities. The majority of assistance to runaways slaves came from fellow slaves and free blacks. The organized efforts of the northern free blacks provided most of the shelter, financial support, and direction to successful runaways.

From slave insurrections that were inspired through radicals such as Nat Turner and John Brown to African American writers and speakers, such as Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and Charles L. Remond, who condemned slavery through their words and deeds, African American abolitionists strove to end slavery and played a key role in underground railroad activities.



## Andrew Nichols (1785-1880)

From the Newhall's home in East Saugus, Dr. Nichols received and cared for escaping slaves. Nichols was the head of the Free Soil Party in South Danvers (now Peabody) and a graduate of Harvard Medical School. In addition to helping escaped slaves, he befriended abolitionist lecturers. His tombstone in Peabody bears the words "Erected by the Friends of Humanity to Humanity's Friend."

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*A . . . line of fugitive travel out of Boston ran some eight miles north to Saugus, where Benjamin Franklin Newhall and his wife Dorothy befriended the Wayfarers. The next station on this line was South Danvers (now Peabody).*

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From Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*

## Saugus



**Benjamin Franklin and Dorothy Newhall House**  
17-19 Ballard Street

Newhall owned a successful manufacturing business in Lynn. He supported temperance and was an abolitionist. This home was a station on an important route that ran from Boston to Newhall's home and on to South Danvers (now Peabody) to the safe house of Dr. Andrew Nichols, who provided medical care to escaping slaves headed north to Canada.

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*The . . . shore line of the Underground system out of Boston ran through Lynn, Salem, Marblehead, Beverly, Ipswich, Newburyport, and Amesbury to Seabrook, New Hampshire, unless the branch from Amesbury to West Newbury was used.*

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From Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*

## Lynn

### Stone Cottage, Hutchinson Court, High Rock

This structure was the home of the Hutchinson Family, who wrote and performed songs expressing their beliefs in equal liberty and equal rights. Their music inspired audiences, engaging emotion as well as intellect to support emancipation.



### Samuel Silsbee House, 10 Burchstead Court (no longer extant)

Silsbee harbored many runaways, among them George W. Latimer, whom he took to Salem in November 1842 by horse and wagon. Dr. Benjamin Percival mentioned Silsbee in a paper he presented to the Lynn Historical Society in 1908:

*I wonder if any one present remembers with me the solid, sturdy form of Sam Silsbee? The story is told of him, that after the passage of the fugitive slave law, when the slave hunters scoured the country, they found one had come to Lynn.*

*In the words of my informant, Mr. Buffum: "They were so keen on the scent that they found Sam was to take a load of hay to Salem, with the man buried in the hay. They watched for him and came up with him on his way. They told him he had a [slave] under the hay. Sam, in his slow, matter of fact way, parleyed with them for a while, when he said to them: 'Well, if you think I have a man in the hay, the only way you can know about it is to unload; but as sure as you are alive, you shall load it again, as it is now.' They looked at the height. It was too much. They concluded there was 'no [slave] in that wood-pile,' and so he bluffed them and the man got safely to Salem."*

Dr. Benjamin Percival, "Abolition in Lynn and Essex County," unpublished paper, Lynn Historical Society, 1908



## Frederick Douglass

As a slave, Frederick Douglass witnessed brutality firsthand. He escaped from servitude in Baltimore in 1838, traveling to New England, where he became a leader of the Massachusetts anti-slavery movement. He lectured for the American Anti-Slavery Society as well. Douglass wrote *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, a short autobiography, in Lynn in 1845. He later established an abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*, in Rochester, New York. Douglass left the U. S. for England after the failure of the John Brown raid at Harpers Ferry, and spent several years there speaking about slavery and abolition. He returned at the beginning of the Civil War to help raise black regiments for the Union war effort, as well as to agitate for black suffrage and civil rights. After the war, he agitated for civil rights, and held several government offices, including Minister to Haiti and Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia. Frederick Douglass died in Washington, D.C., in 1895.

Daguerreotype, c. 1850 courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



### Frederick Douglass Marker and Bandstand, Lynn Common

Douglass caught the attention of William Lloyd Garrison when he spoke at an anti-slavery conference in Nantucket in 1841. Garrison asked Douglass to serve as an agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Douglass and his wife Ann moved to Lynn in 1841, and Douglass delivered his famous speech, "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery" in the city in October of that year.

*"I have come to tell you something about slavery—what I know of it, as I have felt it . . . they cannot speak as I can from experience; they cannot refer you to a back covered with scars, as I can; for I have felt these wounds; I have suffered under the lash without the power of resisting. And yet my master has the reputation of being a pious man and a good Christian."*

*"Prejudice against color is stronger north than south: it hangs around my neck like a heavy weight. It presses me out from among my fellow men, and, although I have met it at every step the three years I have been out of southern slavery, I have been able, in spite of its influence, 'to take good care of myself.'"*

From "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery," an address delivered by Frederick Douglass in Lynn, October 1841.



### George Washington Raddin House, 768 Boston Street

This house was built by a prosperous shoemaking family. According to a 1911 article in the local newspaper, the *Lynn Item*, this house was a station along the network of safe houses that sheltered runaway slaves.



### Nathan Breed Home, 3 Broad Street.

Breed was one of many Quaker abolitionists who actively helped slaves escape to their freedom. His shoe factory at 6 Broad Street still stands.



### Nahant Street

This street, which leads directly to Lynn Harbor, has been called "escape alley" because of the number of homes that have been identified as safe houses. Reports in the *Lynn Item* describe the homes of Nehemiah Bassett (no number), Isaac Bassett (number 17) and Estes Newhall (number 4) as being Underground Railroad sites.



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*Ran away from the Subscriber, Saturday, a NEGRO MAN, named Obed, about 25 Years of Age, somewhat tall, his Skin very black, his Nose uncommonly long for a Negro, he was born at Cohasset, in this Province; it is uncertain what Clothes he had on as he carried away a considerable Quantity with him, among which were, a red Coat with Brass Buttons, green Jacket and breeches with white Buttons: Whoever will take up and secure him, or return him to his Master, shall have THREE DOLLARS Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by RICHARD DERBY. Salem, February 28, 1774*

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An ad placed in the *Salem Gazette* by merchant Richard Derby, who lived at 27 Herbert Street.

## Salem

### Pike House, 18 Crombie Street

Prince Farmer, a black businessman who sold oysters, lived at this address in 1844-45. Mr. Pike was a member of the Masonic fraternity in Salem and an important member of the abolition movement in the city. Several black families lived at this address in the nineteenth century. One resident was Leonard Jackson, born in South Carolina in 1845, who was possibly a freed slave.



### Lyceum, 43 Church Street

Sarah Parker Remond, a member of one of the prominent African American families in Salem, was one of the founders of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1834. The Society sponsored lectures at the Lyceum by important abolitionists, such as Lucy Stone, Charlotte Forten, and William Lloyd Garrison. Remond was a well-known anti-slavery lecturer herself, and toured the eastern United States and England.

### Bowditch House, 9 North Street

This home is the birthplace of William Ingersol Bowditch, son of Nathaniel Bowditch (best known as the author of the *New American Practical Navigator*, first published in 1802). William, who became an abolitionist, spent his childhood years here.



### Salem Public Library, 370 Essex Street

This mansion was the home of merchant and philanthropist John Bertram, who provided financial support for the education of freed slaves.

### Joseph Story House, 26 Winter Street

This was the home of the Supreme Court Justice and abolitionist who was involved in the U.S. Supreme Court decision concerning the vessel *Amistad*. In 1839, a group of Africans was taken by a Spanish schooner and brought as slaves to the Caribbean, where they mutinied off the coast of Cuba. The Africans were captured and tried in the United States, and in 1841 the Supreme Court found that they were free men and victims of kidnapping, a significant victory for the abolitionist movement in the United States.



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*Ran away from Capt. John Dimond, at Marblehead, on Tuesday, the 11th of September Instant, a Spanish Negro Fellow named Cuffe, about twenty-five years old, speaks broken English, and can talk Spanish Language; He is a tall Slim Fellow; had on a new felt Hat, striped homespun Jacket and Breeches, New Shoes with Square Buckles. Whoever will bring or Send the said Negro to Mr. Norwood, Inn holder at Lynn shall have Two dollars Reward and all necessary charges paid. All Masters of vessels and others are cautioned not to conceal or carry off the Said Negro as they would avoid the Penalty of the Law.*

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Advertisement in the *Boston News Letter*, September 20, 1759

## Marblehead



**A.C. Orne House, 21 State Street**

This house was used for secret meetings by leaders of the underground railroad in Marblehead and Salem. Leaders of the cause who attended gatherings here included Simeon and Betsy Dodge, Samuel Goodwin, and John Purvis.

**Ambrose Allen House, 9 Merritt Street**

Abolitionist Ambrose Allen was one of six residents of Marblehead who voted for candidates of the Liberty Party in 1844. The formation of this political party was the beginning of political activism by the abolitionist movement. Among other issues, the Liberty Party advocated the total abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Abolitionism was very popular in Marblehead, and many major figures in the movement lived in the town.



**Simeon and Betsy Dodge House, 236 Washington Street**

For over twenty years, the Dodes provided shelter to a large number of freedom-seekers at this address. They housed, clothed and fed escaped slaves, sometimes for long periods of time, until a safe escape could be planned. Among the escapees sheltered by the Dodes were the Craft family and Henry “Box” Brown.

## Simeon and Betsy Dodge

Simeon Dodge was born in Gloucester, MA, in 1815. By the 1830s, he had moved to Marblehead, where in 1839, he married Betsy Dodge (born in 1819), and together they raised six children in their house on Washington Street. After the Civil War, Simeon served as Collector of Customs for Marblehead from 1871 to 1884, and he was also a State Senator during the 1890-1891 session. Simeon also served on various committees for Marblehead, including the committee to build Abbott Hall. During the Abolitionist period, the Dodes were major figures in the Underground Railroad in southern Essex County. One friend later recalled during the Danvers anti-slavery reunion meeting [see page 11], “It was much easier in those days to make speeches, than to *do the work* and run the *constant risks*—cheerfully done and bravely borne by those noble souls, Simeon Dodge and wife, of Marblehead.”

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*From Salem three Underground trails diverged to the northward, one through Danvers, Andover, Frye Village, South Lawrence, and across the New Hampshire line; another by way of Danvers, Georgetown, and Haverhill into the same state; and the third by way of Beverly, Ipswich, Newburyport, and Amesbury to Seabrook, New Hampshire.*

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From Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*

## Danvers

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*Run away from his master Mr. Timothy Perkins of Middleborough [sic] the county of Essex, a negro servant named Pompey, of a middle stature; said Fellow has lost one finger from one of his hands; Whosoever shall take up said Negro and convey him to his master shall have Four Dollars reward, and all necessary charges paid.*

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Advertisement in the *Boston Gazette*, November 6, 1757.



### **Sarah Elizabeth Baker Bradstreet House, Elm and Putnam Streets**

The home of Mr. and Mrs. D. Brooks Baker became a stop on the Underground Railroad as anti-slavery societies took shape in Danvers. In 1857, seven-year-old Sarah Elizabeth Baker became part of the UGRR. Her parents hid a fugitive slave who had escaped after seeing his wife and children sold. Sarah Elizabeth helped heal the long, raw, swollen whip marks on his back by holding the light while her mother covered a bed with a thick layer of brown sugar and then heated the sugar with a long-handled bed warmer. Sarah helped her father gently lay the fugitive on his back in the warm sugar. The escapee stayed in the front chamber for two weeks, nursed by Sarah's parents, before he headed north.

### **Alfred Fellows House, 48 Elm Street**

Alfred Fellows was a carpenter and manufacturer, who built this house in 1845. He was heavily involved with the pre-Civil War anti-slavery movement and was a member of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Fellows hosted many abolitionist meetings in this house, and among his guests were Frederick Douglass, Julia Ward Howe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.



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*A branch of the Underground Railroad ran from Woburn to Reading, northeastward, which was on the main line to Andover, South Lawrence and across to North Salem in New Hampshire.*

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From Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*

## Andover

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*A FUGITIVE- A fugitive slave who had just escaped with his sister from the Old Dominion, passed through this town one day last week. He received some substantial aid from sympathizing friends here, and was sent on his way to the "land of the free" blacks.*

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From the *Andover Advertiser*, July 7, 1860.



### **William Jenkins House, 8 Douglass Street, formerly 89 Jenkins Road, Boston-Haverhill Turnpike**

Jenkins and his wife, Mary Saltmarsh Farnham from North Andover, ran a station here. The Jenkins supported immediate emancipation and regularly attended anti-slavery rallies at Boston, Worcester and Lynn. This principle UGRR stop was in operation from the 1830s onward. Anti-slavery meetings were often held here and attended by many famous visitors, among them Harriet Beecher Stowe, Douglass, Garrison and the Hutchinson Family. Fugitive slaves could be found at the Jenkins' house as late as 1863.

### **Holt Cogswell House, 373 South Main Street**

Descendents of Samuel Cogswell, originally from Ipswich, inherited this house in 1830 and made it a "safe house." The Cogswell barn, built across the road, stood for a hundred years and provided a place to hide runaways requiring food and rest.







## George W. Latimer

In 1842, Latimer and his wife fled a plantation in Norfolk, Virginia, to avoid being sold and separated. They were living and working among the free black community by Beacon Hill when they were arrested without a warrant. The man who owned them was merely reclaiming his property. Abolitionist lawyer Wendell Phillips defended Latimer in Faneuil Hall, and, as a result, the Massachusetts Legislature passed the Personal Liberty Law. Known as the Latimer Law, it prohibited state aid in capturing fugitives from other states.

After the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law was passed, Latimer became increasingly terrified that kidnappers would send him south into slavery again. He moved around to various Massachusetts safe houses, including the Jenkins farm in Andover. Jenkins' daughter, Belle Butterfield, told a friend that when she was five, Latimer stood her on a table to demonstrate how "little slave girls" got sold at auction.

Engraving from the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society



### Mark Newman House, 210 Main Street (on Phillips Academy campus)

This UGRR stop was the student residence of the famous physician and author, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. Professor of church history Rev. Ralph Emerson (a second cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson) lived here between 1829 and 1853 and harbored fugitive slaves in this house.

### Stowe House, 80 Bartlett Street (on the Phillips Academy campus)

Called "The Stone Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe, this house was originally located where the Andover Inn stands today. Stowe wrote numerous books during her twelve years in Andover from 1852 to 1864, including *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which provided documentation for her famous book in response to attacks from critics. Stowe entertained many famous abolitionists in this house, including Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and William Lloyd Garrison, and traveled from here to Europe to lecture on the evils of slavery. The building now serves as a faculty house and dormitory for Phillips Academy students.



### Frye Village (now Shawsheen Village)

Frye Village was the location of Elijah Hussey's sawmill, the ink factory of William C. Donald, and the flourishing wagon factory of William Poor and his sons, where wagons were built with false bottoms in order to secretly transport slaves. All these individuals were dedicated abolitionists and in 1846 organized the Free Christian Church. Several hundred fugitive slaves are estimated to have received assistance in Frye Village. Since the development of Shawsheen Village in 1918, all that remains of Frye Village sites relevant to the UGRR is the former home of blacksmith Joseph Poor at 66 Poor Street, built about 1830.

### Free Christian Church, 31 Elm Street

Followers of this church relocated to the current site after the original church was purchased by a railroad company and removed. The church was organized in 1846 by abolitionists Elijah Hussey, William C. Donald and William Poor and his sons, who had separated from South Church. Church members contributed generously to a fund for fugitive slaves.




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*"...in visiting our cellar, I heard a noise in the coal-bin. I investigated and discovered a negro woman concealed there. I had been reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, as well as listening to the conversation of my elders so I was vastly stirred over the negro question. My mother wisely kept me close to her for several days, until the escaped slave my father was hiding was safely out of the house and away."*

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Written by Anna Howard Shaw as a child in 1857 in her home at the rear of High Street, Lawrence. She later became a women's suffrage leader. From Anna Howard Shaw, "Story of a Pioneer;" in *The Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad in Andover & Greater Lawrence* (Andover, MA: Phillips Academy, 2001).

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*On April 4, 1834, “forty-six gentlemen were present from eleven towns of the county” to form the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society in Topsfield. They “resolved, that immediate measures be taken by this Convention for the formation of an Anti-Slavery Society in each town in the county, where no such society now exists.”*

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*Lynn Record, April 23, 1834*

## Topsfield



### Gould Barn, 1 Howlett Street

On display is an abolitionist banner discovered at the Capen House (1683), also in Topsfield, entitled “Topsfield Fremont and Dayton Club.” John C. Fremont was the Republican presidential candidate in 1856, an ardent abolitionist who ran against the pro-slavery Democratic party candidate James Buchanan. An article from the July 22, 1856, *Salem Gazette* announced the formation of a Fremont Club in Topsfield, which resolved that a victory of freedom over slavery would be a victory for the entire country. However, Buchanan won. At a political meeting held in Georgetown on October 16, 1856, the Topsfield Fremont and Dayton Club marched in the procession with this banner.

## Georgetown

### Captain Samuel Brocklebank House (Brocklebank Museum), 108 East Main Street

Reverend Charles Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe and an important figure in the abolitionist movement, owned this home in the 1850s. It is strongly believed that this home was an underground railroad stop when Reverend Beecher lived at this site. In the cellar, there is a small hiding place that is accessible only through a trap door on the first floor.



## Groveland



### Lemuel Marden House, 239 Main Street

This privately owned house, located close to the Merrimack River, was built in the 1700s. Some historians believe that the Marden house may have harbored escaping slaves, because of the existence of tunnels underneath the house. In addition, a cot and a pair of leg irons were discovered in a secret room on the second floor above a closet to the left of the front door, further evidence of abolitionist activity on the part of the owners in the nineteenth century.

## Haverhill

### Harmon House, Summer Street and Maple Avenue

This home belonged to David P. Harmon, an active abolitionist who sheltered fugitives referred by his friend, the Quaker poet and Amesbury resident John Greenleaf Whittier.





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*“They would come, seldom more than one at a time, cold, tired, half scared to death, and hungry, arriving just before daylight, or before anyone was stirring in the morning. I would feed them, hide them up in the loft, where they would rest up in the day time, and after dark, I would take them to the next friend, who would pass them on as soon as he could,” Mr. Friend told me.*

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Quotation from Archer M. Nickerson, in a newspaper clipping in the archives of the Danvers Historical Society

## Manchester

### Bingham Home, 7 Central Street

This building was a safe house for escapees heading for New Hampshire. During the 1850s, Delucena Lathrop Bingham and Emmeline Bingham offered shelter and food to escaping slaves.



### Daniel Friend House, 8 Friend Street

Records show that Daniel Friend, who grew up at 10 Friend Street, built this house in 1845. The garret of this house, according to local histories, was a hiding room for fugitive slaves.

### 78 School Street

Built in 1720, the home of fishermen, mariners, and sea captains in the eighteenth century and owned for many years by the Lee family, this house has a paneled wall that opens up to reveal a narrow passage and traces of steps that once led to the third floor. According to oral histories, the house was a stop where escaping slaves climbed the secret stair to safety above.



## Ipswich

### Old Parsonage, 19 North Main Street

This house was built by Dr. Thomas Manning in January 1799. On January 11, 1858, Dr. Manning's son, Dr. John Manning, sold the property to Augustine Heard, who, in turn, gave the house (then known as “The Mansion”) to the First Parish to be used as a parsonage. This building remained a parsonage until the mid-1950s, when it was sold to the present owners.



The cellar of the house is very large and includes a number of brick barrel-vaulted areas designed to keep the river rats out of the stored food. Two brick 800-gallon cisterns constructed to collect fresh rain water still stand in the cellar. According to oral histories, one of the brick barrel-vaulted areas hid access to a tunnel leading down hill to the Ipswich River. Slaves would be taken after dark to the river behind the house and punted down river through the cove to the town wharf, where cargo ships would take them to Nova Scotia.



## William Lloyd Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips were the two most prominent Massachusetts abolitionists of the antebellum era. Garrison was born in Newburyport in 1805. From age 9 onward he was apprenticed to different tradesmen, and he eventually became a printer's apprentice, a trade for which he showed great aptitude. Garrison began working for the *Newburyport Herald* at age thirteen, and he eventually became a full-fledged journeyman at that newspaper. In 1828, Garrison's career took him to Boston and Vermont. He then moved to Baltimore in 1829, where he joined the abolitionist movement. Maryland was a slave-owning state, and his political writings made him very unpopular in Baltimore, where he was imprisoned for his activities. After he was released from jail, Garrison returned to Boston, where he became editor of the famous anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*. In 1831 Garrison formed the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which demanded the immediate abolition of slavery.

Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress

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*"On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation...I will not equivocate-I will not excuse- I will not retreat a single inch- and I will be heard."*

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Garrison on the subject of abolition in *The Liberator*, January 1, 1831

## West Newbury



### Pleasant Street Cemetery

Among the gravestones in this cemetery is that of Reverend Daniel Webster, an active abolitionist who died in the Civil War.

## Newburyport

### Richard Plumer House, 62 Federal Street

Captain Alexander Graves, a Mr. Jackman and Richard Plumer were all active on the underground railroad in Newburyport. The Plumer house had a barn in the rear where fugitives were hidden. Plumer's young son Wendell Phillips Plumer would ride in the wagon at night when his father drove to the south end of town to meet escapees brought from Ipswich by the bridge over the Parker River. Fugitives were hidden among the grain and driven through the town to Mr. Jackman's house at the north end, and Jackman took them to Lee, New Hampshire. Sometimes, Mr. Plumer would cross the Merrimack and take the fugitives directly to Amesbury, delivering them to John Greenleaf Whittier or his agent.



### Statue of William Lloyd Garrison, Brown Square

This statue of the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who was born in Newburyport, stands on Brown Square, the scene of many abolitionist gatherings. The Essex County Anti-Slavery Society held its annual meeting in Brown Square on May 31, 1836. Garrison's friend, Amesbury poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier, was among the speakers who addressed that meeting.

## Amesbury

### John Greenleaf Whittier House, 86 Friend Street

This nineteenth century house was the home of John Greenleaf Whittier for 56 years. It was here that the Quaker poet wrote his anti-slavery verses and assisted fugitives on the underground railroad. Whittier would harbor escapees brought from Newburyport by Richard Plumer, and sometimes conducted fugitives to his friend, David P. Harmon, in Haverhill.



## The Danvers Reunion



On April 26, 1893, a reunion of abolitionists and their descendants took place in town hall in Danvers. Speeches, poems, and songs recalled those who had risked arrest and imprisonment to assist fugitive slaves to find freedom.

As can be seen in the photograph of some of the participants, those figures in the Underground Railroad movement who had died in the decades after the Civil War were represented by portraits. From the left to the right the portraits are: Charles Sumner, Rev. Samuel J. May, William Lloyd Garrison, and John Greenleaf Whittier. During the proceedings, William Lloyd Garrison's son and namesake spoke about his father's life and legacy, and a letter was read to the assembled audience from Frederick Douglass, who had retired to his home outside of Washington, D.C.

John W. Hutchinson is seated fifth from the left in the first row. He was seventy-two years old at the time of the reunion, and he, along with some of his children and grandchildren, sang some of the anti-slavery songs that had made John and his brothers and sisters household names in the United States and England.

During the Danvers reunion, while most of the speakers remembered and celebrated the work of the anti-slavery movement, some of the speakers looked toward the future. Lucy Stone and Parker Pillsbury, both famous anti-slavery activists, made connections between the activism and moral authority of the abolitionists and the growing women's rights movement. Many of the women who were asking for the constitutional right to vote had learned about political organization and civil disobedience during their years as abolitionists.

Many of the attendees of the Danvers reunion would look back with pride at the end of slavery, then roll up their sleeves again and return to their work against injustice: helping freed slaves to get education, advocating against racist laws, and ensuring that black and white women were given the right to vote.





#### Salem Maritime National Historic Site

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## Sources

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In 1996, Congress designated Essex County, Massachusetts, as a National Heritage Area in order to enhance, preserve, and encourage awareness of the county's historic, cultural, and natural resources and traditions. For more information, visit the ENHA web site: <http://www.essexheritage.org>.

This brochure is part of the "Network to Freedom" initiative of the National Park Service. The National Park Service is implementing a national Underground Railroad program to coordinate preservation and education efforts nationwide and integrate local historical places, museums, and interpretive programs associated with the Underground Railroad into a mosaic of community, regional, and national stories.